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BASIC PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COUNCIL

Letter dated 6 February 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with rule 12, paragraph 1, of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council, I have the honour to request the inclusion in the agenda of the substantive session of 1997 of an item entitled "The Year 2000: International Year of Thanksgiving".

This proposal enjoys the support of prestigious institutions in the United States of America and of various Member States which seek to celebrate cultural diversity.

In accordance with the provisions of rule 12 of the rules of procedure of the Council, a supporting statement setting forth the reasons of the Government of Argentina for making this request is annexed hereto.

(Signed) Ana María RAMÍREZ

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Annex

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

The observance of a year of thanksgiving affords an opportunity to recall the fundamental importance which cultural diversity has for the development of harmonious and rich international relations.

In many of the world's countries the harvest is marked by important social and cultural events. The annual celebration of thanksgiving takes place on various dates and takes different forms. Up until now, it has not been observed by the international community as a whole. The observance of the year 2000 as the International Year of Thanksgiving will afford the international community an opportunity to do so.

The proposal is for an international observance in the year 2000, to be organized by the Centre for World Thanksgiving, and a series of national observances on various dates which are significant for each individual country, linked, in particular, with the annual harvest. In these observances, emphasis will be placed on the great importance of thanksgiving as an expression of gratitude in history, in philosophy, in the arts, in religion and in culture.

The observance of the year 2000 as the International Year of Thanksgiving within the United Nations will serve to harmonize the efforts of the different countries to achieve complete tolerance and to strengthen world peace.

This proposal will benefit international cooperation by promoting an awareness among peoples and Governments of the great importance of gratitude both in the personal life of individuals and in the life of communities, as well as in relations between countries and cultures.

The observance of the international year will generate complementary activities at the national and international levels through contacts with universities in different continents, interfaith services and academic and cultural events in various countries.

It will also mean beginning the twenty-first century and the new millennium with an International Year of Thanksgiving to celebrate the gift of life as the noblest expression of the human spirit.

The proposed item is in keeping with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and will contribute to the progress of international cooperation, thereby fostering solutions to problems having a bearing on development.

The proposal is intended precisely to promote friendly relations among nations. This is an especially timely objective as the United Nations is embarking upon its second half-century.

Lastly, it should be emphasized that the proclamation of the International Year and the activities connected with it will have no financial implications for the United Nations or other international organizations.